

VZCZCXYZ0017  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSJ #0692 2381502  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 251502Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0036  
INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 000692

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PM/DTCC - BLUE LANTERN COORDINATOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETTC](#) [KOMC](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: BLUE LANTERN LEVEL 3: PRE-LICENSE END-USE CHECK  
CONDUCTED ON LICENSE 050108543

REF: A. STATE 69218

[1](#)B. 06 SAN JOSE 1586

[1](#)1. Per Ref A request, on August 21, we met with Juan Carlos Martin, the owner of Armas Martin Armar, and established the bona fides of the company. We consider Armas Martin Armar a legitimate recipient of United States Munitions List (USML) items. Martin told us he was familiar with the regulations governing the import of U.S.-origin defense articles, including restrictions on re-transfer or re-export. We recommend approval of the license to import the weapons as described in Ref A.

[1](#)2. Armas Martin Armar, located in San Jose, has been in business since 2003. In 2006, this company was subject to an unfavorable Blue Lantern (Ref B) due to its then relationship with unreliable gunshop Armeria Rex. During our August 21 visit, Martin was transparent about all interactions that his company has had with Armeria Rex. As a result of losing the license in 2006, he stopped selling weapons to other gunshops. When asked about his current business relationship with Armeria Rex, Martin said they no longer sell weapons to them but they occasionally buy some accessories from Rex, such as electronic stun guns, mace spray, etc. He made it clear that he would not sell weapons to Armeria Rex now or in the future.

[1](#)3. Martin also clarified Post's confusion regarding the relationship between his company and another company, Electromecanica Pablo Murillo, due to background checks we completed on Martin Armar showing the two companies sharing the same phone number. Martin said that he and Pablo Murillo had founded a business corporation to sell arms back in 2003 with assistance from Murillo's father, who works for ICE (Costa Rica's national telecom provider). Murillo's father assisted them with the installation of their phone lines and were thus registered under the name Electromecanica Pablo Murillo. Though now split, Armas Martin Armar pays the phone bill under the original registration name of Electromecanica because they did not want to change their phone number for their customers. Martin said they would do the necessary work to drop the name of Electromecanica, yet still hopefully keep the same phone number.

[1](#)4. We also shared with Martin a press article detailing some negative information on Finlander Paniagua, who has bought weapons from Martin Armar in the past and resold them to customers in the northern part of Costa Rica. Martin was unaware of any potential problems with Paniagua and assured us he would be diligent in the future with any dealings with him. The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) informed us that Paniagua does have a valid permit to sell weapons in Costa Rica, but that he can only sell one weapon at a time with a lawyer's script. We do not expect Martin Armar to sell

weapons to Paniagua in the future. We also checked all of Martin Armar's weapons sales in 2008 and no weapons had been sold to Paniagua.

¶5. The security of the premises of Martin Armar seems very good. There are three barred, reinforced doors between the exterior entrance and the weapons displays. The weapons storage vault, as previously described in Ref B, has a reinforced door with heavy security locks. The store has a modern alarm and camera system. Martin Armar maintains files on all of their customers and is visited twice a week by the MPS's General Directorate for Arms and Explosives to review and approve purchase requests and final sales. The company has a valid license to import and sell firearms from the Ministry.

=====  
COMMENT  
=====

¶6. Martin was transparent and clearly wanted to cooperate with us. There was no hesitation to show us records, files, or explain the nature of his company's relationship with Armeria Rex. All of his paperwork seemed in order and well organized. Of all the gunshops in Costa Rica Post has visited in recent memory, there is little doubt that this one has the best security and most professional image.  
CIANCHETTE